



GLIMPSE OF KALPATHY RETHOLSAVAM AND CARNATIC MUSIC FIESTA

Shaji Antony Thekekkara¹ | Shinsy Thomas²

¹(M.A, MPhil in Music), Research Student, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, India.

²(M.A in Sociology), Research Student, Annamali University, Bhavan's Public School-Doha-Qatar.

ABSTRACT

The district Palakkad has a glorious cultural tradition. The place is blessed with writers like Kunjan nambiar, the most popular poet of Malayalam and the founder of Thullal, purely a Kerala art form, had his birth in a small village called Killikurissimangalam in this district. Worthy contributions have been made by talented artists of this district for maintaining and enriching the classical music and dance forms of Kerala, such as Chakkai Koothu, Thullal, Kathakali and Mohiniattam. Another important festival is the Kalpathy Ratholsavam. This is festival of the Tamil Brahmins.

KEY WORDS: Kalpathy, Ratholsavam, Music Festival.

INTRODUCTION:

Kalpathy Ratholsavam is the annual ten-day chariot festival conducted here during the month of November. Usually it celebrates from 7 to 15, of the month, it is most remarkable festivals of Kerala. The first four days of the festival Vedic recitals and cultural programs are held in the temple. The festival lasts for three long days and many temples participate in the event. Kalpathy visalakshi sametha viswanatha swami temple, manthakkara managanapati temple, chathapuram prasanna managanapati temple and old kalpathy Lakshmi Narayan swami temple, these are the 5 participants. Chariots from these temples ride through the narrow streets of kalpathy during festival season. Usually on November 15 which marks the end of the festival, all the 5 participants assemble together in front of kalpathy viswanatha swami temple. During this time, chariots (rathas) from 4 temples of kalpathy come together and circumvent streets of the villages in a grand procession. This event is known as devarathasamgamam. Music festival is also conducted as a part of the festival at chathapuram mridangam Mani Ayer road just before commencement of Ratholsavam. The routines and customs of Unchavriti and Pancharatna Keerthan aalapan are carried out on the festival days. Many prominent musicians are attending every year for this music festival. The music festival announces the importance of the music festival in south India. This article intent to study the annual music festivals in kalpathy.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology adopted for this study is historical and analytical. Data is collected from both primary and secondary source. For primary source, Temples were visited and interviews were done with the exponents of these Ratholsavam and Music festival. Secondary source comprises of references taken from books, journals, periodicals, articles, paper cuttings and internet. Photographs of some of the festival, concerts as well as instruments are included in this study.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The topic of this study is 'GLIMPS OF KALPATHY RETHOLSAVAM AND MUSIC FIESTA'. The objective of the study is to showcase the music festival that is conducted Palakkad, in Kerala. Present study is taken up with the intention of popularizing music festival as well as the legends and the melophiles used to attend these festivals.

KALPATHY MUSIC FESTIVAL:

"Music is the general principle of human sciences. The Gods have given it to us not only for the delight of the ear, but also to establish harmony in the faculties of the soul"

(Plato, the Greek Philosopher)

The advent of Carnatic Music into Palakkad started with the migration of Brahmins from Tamil Nadu. It was during the twelve Century that the Brahmins living in the Cauvery Basin – Trichy, Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Mayavaram etc. Started moving out of this area into safer places, because of prolonged famine etc. Finding the Nile river basin, as somewhat similar to Cauvery, they chose this area to settle with the encouragement of the then ruling establishment. The migrated Brahmins consisted of Vedic Scholars and substantial number of Musicians. Tanjore and nearby areas are known as the hub of Carnatic Music. The migration of musicians from this area was a boon. They devoted their full attention to turn these Aghrahams and particularly Palakkad as a citadel of Carnatic Music.

In the early years of nineteenth century, a religious savant named Rajaram Swamigal, a direct disciple of Saint Thyagaraja, visited Kalpathy. Attracted by the development of Carnatic Music here, he established a Madam in Kalpathy. Known as Ramadhyana Madam. Here Music classes were being conducted by Flute Vidwan Nochoor Krishna Ayer, during his life time. Thyagaraja Aradhana was started being conducted here at the initiative of the grant musician Sri.Rama Bhagavathar and Mridangam Vidwan sri subba Ayer, which was continued by Palakkad Sri Mani Ayer. Ever now the Aradhana festival is being conducted every year in the same manner as is being conducted at Thiruvayaru, Tamil Nadu. It is no wonder that among the prominent musicians, the maximum number belong to Palakkad area. The involvement and devotion to Carnatic Music of the households of this area continue to this day.

Though Carnatic music grew up in Tamil Nadu, Palakkad is its source in Palakkad. Endorsing this sage saying, Indian music and musician always aimed at the affinity of the listener's soul by giving delight to his ear. Through affinity, the liberalization of the soul or the attainment of Moksha is also feasible to those who are extremely immersed in our music which is devotional in character, whether they are composers, musicians or listeners. No doubt, music combined with devotion can lead us to the flush of spiritual elevation. Among the Great Composers of the past, the names of three saintly souls who are collectively known as the Musical Trinity of South India remain splendid. Indian Classical Music is believed to have originated from the ritualistic music, which had been in existence since the dawn of history. The scholars trace back its origin to the chanting of Vedas.

Kalpathy Sangitotsav which was framed up for being the center of the classical music commenced from the year 1988. It was under the project vision of Sir. Ch.M. Sundaram who was the former minister and Member of legislative assembly. He was discerned of the music festival which has been hosted in the Palakkad district of Kerala. The government of Kerala merged it along DTPC (Tourism promotion council) and promoted to preserve the cultural heritage of music festival to introduce the structure and content of ancient music and musicians to the current generation. Since from 1988, Kerala govt. has been bolstering up immensely for the same. The music festival is hosted in public and is made governmental under the direction of district collector and chairman. Sri Shubharaman has been the general convener and music promoter from past 25 years and has been the secretary of Palakkad fine arts Society which is set up opposite to Chembai Music College in Palakkad. The dist. Collector and officials informs the context of programmer and organize the musicians and agenda to be followed throughout the music festival. The scores of great legendary musicians and the tremendous Trimurti trinity (Shyamashasthrikal, Muthuswami Deekshithar, Thyagarajaswamikal) who are the bedrock Carnatic music are retrieved during this music festival. Each day is dedicated to one of these legends and the respective musical notes structured by them are performed in that particular day.

A big crowd follows up the music festival. It is conducted from 5-10. Musicians from South Kerala perform the scores composed by the renowned musician who is retrieved on that respective day from 5-7 and is followed by "kachery" which has been a hereditary treasure that's carried along from the time of beginning of this music festival performed by the current leading musicians from 7-10. Students from Chembai Music College and chittoor Music College are given chances to perform for kalpathy music festival. To innovate the young generation and to pass on the hoary artistic heritage of instrumental and vocal music, competitions are held for the same for students and prizes are announced based on their

performance.

It is said that Tamil Nadu is the cradle of Carnatic music whereas it was brought up in Palakkad. There's a statement made by a respected musician Dr. C. S. Krishnanyar, who is the former principal of Chembai Music College. When Music resides in the pillars of Thanjavoor, music can be heard eve from each grain particle in kalpathy "which proclaims the musical heritage of this place. This land of Palakkad is bestowed with innumerable legends like palakkat s. Mani Ayer, Chembai Vaidyanathar Bhagavathar, Chembai kalyanakrishna Bhagavathar, M.D Ramanathan who are known to the world for the contribution they gave for Carnatic music. "Ratholsavam " the so called kalpathy music festival is linked with religious ceremony durgarohanam and is hosted for 7 days. This music festival has witnessed the presence of numerous acclaimed personalities who has outshined in various sectors of instrumental and vocals of music. Kalpathy music festival has now grown to be a worldwide accepted platform for south Indian music. With all due support and encouragement of people working on and behind the scenes under the surveillance of the government officials of palghat , the district collector and chairman , this musical festival is successfully hosted in a frequent regular episode. The host days of this musical festival is a ceremonious celebration across palghat and is hosted with a sole intension to preserve the hoary artistic heritage and precisions of ancient musical scores and musicians and to handover this cultural endowment of music to the new younger generation. All the artists are considered to perform in this irrespective of the differences. It is the celebration of musical scores and only Carnatic music is allowed to be performed on the Dias of this music festival.

A ceremony named Thyagaraja adoration "also takes place in which the Pancharathna keerthanas of Thyagaraja swamikal is performed by the musicians and they are bestowed with rewards like musical instruments. The musical festival is linked with religious ceremony. Durgarohanam initiated in vishraswami temple embarks the beginning of kalpathy music festival. Three radhas run along the village of kalpathy on the seventh day. Artists who wish to perform are asked to forward applications to DTPC center where each one of them will be considered. We go through the Ragas and scores what musicians are about to sing and Panjaratna Keerthanas are entertained more.



Panchathantra keerthanalapanam



Thyagaraja swamikal dinam



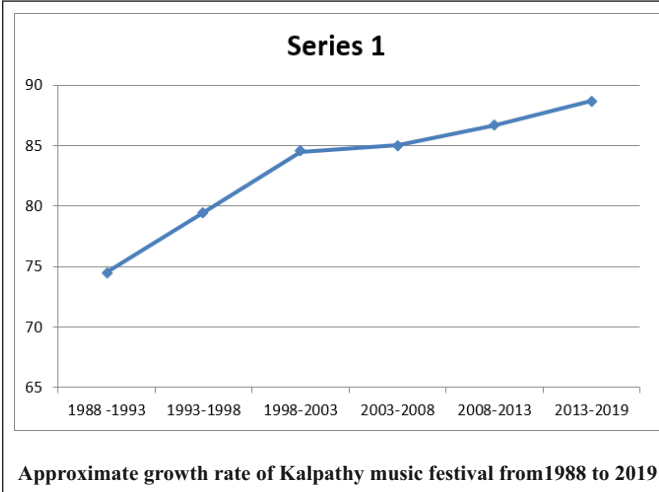
C.M Sundaram, Minister and MLA were the convener Founder of the Kalpathy sangeetholsavam.



Shri. Subharaman, General Kalpathy music festival

FINDINGS

Kalpathy music festival more popularly known as Ratholsavam is widely reached to audience even the foreigners and people of our motherland. Ratholsavam is taken into hearts. In 2017 this music festival was celebrated as a national music festival and it has an official emblem given by DTPC and was published in the year 2017. This logo was decided to be highlighted as the festival's icon in coming years. Natural calamities that occurred unprecedentedly during the festive period ceased the hostage of music festival during the years that followed up (2018&2019). But the music festival is growing ear by year in among the people. People are attracted to this festival it shows the present generation is enjoy and welcome this musical feast with great enthusiasm. Over the years, the organizers have been working hard to bring this new generation to the music world and to encourage it. It is noteworthy that the late music masters are remembered and whose works are given prominence. The old traditions are still kept with the same value without being forgotten. The music festival is attended by people from all walks of life. The number of traps and participants has increased significantly since the government took over. Due to the floods, the government has taken the initiative to hold the festival for the last two years 2018, 2019 and the festival has been in full swing. Preserving the musical heritage of Palakkad and commemorating the musicians and musical instruments, the music festival is still going on in a very proud manner.



CONCLUSION:

As mentioned above even a grain particle of palghat has music within it. And this signifies the amore for music what natives of palghat carry along as they have always entertained and admired the godliness in music. The land of palghat is the birthplace of numerous eminent musicians and has lent ears to their heavenly music scores. Since from the year of beginning Ratholsavam has been attracting artists and people across territories as well. The demised legendries of Carnatic music and their compositions are retrieved and admired during the festival which paves way for the preservation of ancient cultural heritage and is the sole intention of kalpathy music festival. Both instrumentals and vocals are considered vital during the festival. Ratholsavam has been a platform of opportunity for various artists to perform and exhibit their inborn talents. It is the immense pleasure towards the hoary musical heritage and culture of ancient traditions that inspires to conduct this music festival throughout every year and is not intended to gain financial attaints.

SOURCES:

- The particulars regarding the music festival was gathered from Shri. Shubharaman, The general convener of festival committee, Shri: Arackal Nandakumar and the crew of tourism promotion council did lend a helping hand to collect the photographs and details of the music festival.
- An interview conducted with the former Deputy collector of Palakkad P.Vijaymbika.
- As an author I also had an opportunity to participate for the music festival in the year of 2008 along with my batch of postgraduate music students from Chittoor Govt.College, Palakkad.

REFERENCES:

- I. Biju Mathew: - (2012) Tradition and Fascinating Designations, page 436
- II. Biju Mathew: - (2016) Tradition and Fascinating Designations, page 424
- III. Biju Mathew: - (2018) Tradition and Fascinating Designations, page 418
- IV. Malabar Tourism book :(2005) page 81--Snippet view.
- V. The news minute of MalayalaManorama-(2018) November 14
- VI. THE HINDU: (2015)-November-9 (2017) November-8